



ELY RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

in the

Administrative County of Cambridgeshire

and the Isle of Ely

A N N U A L R E P O R T

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

Including the

Report of the Chief Public Health Inspector

for

1 9 6 7

B.W.M. MACARTNEY

B.M., B.Ch., D.P.H., D.C.H., D(Obst.), R.C.O.G.

Medical Officer of Health

Ely Rural District Council

Shire Hall,

Cambridge

Tel. No: Cambridge 58811.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Officers

Medical Officer of Health:

K.S. MAURICE-SMITH, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.
(Died 15th October, 1967).

M.E. HOCKEN, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.
(Acting from 15th October, 1967)

Chief Public Health Inspector:

D.J. GWYNN, M.A.P.H.I., Cert. R.S.H. and P.H.I.E.B.
Inspector of Meat & Other Foods.

Additional Public Health Inspector:

A.P. SHAW, M.A.P.H.I., Dip. P.H.I.E.B.

Clerk/Typist:

MRS. M. MAIN.

LOCAL INFORMATION

Area.....	66,082 acres
Number of Parishes.....	12
Rateable Value at 31.3.67.....	£314,102.
Penny rate for 1966/67.....	£1,207.
Estimated Number of Inhabited dwellings.....	4170.
Estimated mid-year population.....	14,760



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To the Chairman and Members
of the
Ely Rural District Council

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my privilege to present the Annual Report of your Medical Officer of Health for the year 1967, the year during the greater part of which the Public Health Department was under the direction of my predecessor, Dr. K.S. Maurice-Smith, until his death in October of that year. I take this opportunity to apologise for the late appearance of this report but in the circumstances it could hardly have been avoided.

It is not easy to write a report relating to a year that was completed 8 months before I took up my appointment, but the Medical Officer of Health always relies heavily upon information which is kept, assembled and made available to him by the Chief Public Health Inspector and this information has been most generously provided for me.

On this occasion I do not propose to comment in detail upon the information before me.

Vital Statistics

Some of the figures in the vital statistics may look a little curious - for instance the still birth rate was twice the national rate and the infant mortality rate was a quarter of the national rate - this is the kind of statistical quirk that inevitably arises where the numbers involved are quite small. It is particularly pleasing to note that no woman died in childbirth.

Infectious Diseases

88 cases of measles were noted during 1967 as against 140 in 1965 and 190 in 1966. Although this shows a relative decrease, the potential danger of this disease is tragically underlined by the death of one child. The disease is no longer the killer that it was in this country last century and still is in the developing countries, but protection offered by immunisation is none the less worthwhile.

One new case of tuberculosis was noted in 1967. The register now reads:-

Tuberculosis Register

	Male	Female
Respiratory	23	30
Non- Respiratory	2	3

Environmental Circumstances

It is particularly pleasing to observe that all premises upon which food is sold complied with Regulation 16 (Food Hygiene Regulations 1960) but, as the Chief Public Health Inspector implies in his report, it is one thing for the management to provide adequate washing facilities and quite another to ensure that staff use them. In this matter the public's health quite literally rests in its own hands and in the hands of those who serve its food.

I hope that the sheer bulk of the report of the Chief Public Health Inspector does not bear too silent a witness to the immense amount of work that the department undertakes. It is my purpose to go into this in detail in order to establish priorities in terms of our major duty to safeguard the Public Health. For instance it is not immediately evident how the names of streets and numbers of houses can present a public health hazard, though the dwellings themselves both old and new may do.

I have already mentioned my indebtedness to Mr. Gwynn but I would also like to record my thanks to him for his help.

If you will allow me to anticipate my next Annual Report I would like to thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Council for the kindness of your welcome.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Your Obedient Servant,

B.W.M. Macartney.

GENERAL PROVISIONS OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

Medical Officer of Health

Dr. K.S. Maurice-Smith died 15th October, 1967.

Dr. M.E. Hocken from October 1967.

Public Health Inspectors

During the year Mr. Gwynn continued as Chief Public Health Inspector assisted by Mr. Shaw.

Laboratory Facilities

Chemical and bacteriological examinations of water are made by the Public Analyst at Cambridge. The Public Health Laboratory, Cambridge, undertake bacteriological and biological examinations of milk and bacteriological examinations of water samples, and all necessary examinations in cases of infectious diseases.

Hospitals

The District is served by hospitals of the East Anglian Regional Hospital Board. Cases of infectious disease requiring hospital treatment are sent to Cambridge City Isolation Hospital.

Ambulance Service

Two ambulances are stationed at Ely, both being operated by Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely County Council.

The Littleport St. John Ambulance continues to work under the agency agreement with the County Council. This vehicle, which serves the local area, and those areas adjoining when necessary, continues to be of the greatest value. It is manned and run by local St. John members.

Assistance is given on occasions by members of the Ely St. John Ambulance Division.

Nursing Services

These services are provided by the County Council - details in Appendix 'A'.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH (INFECTIOUS DISEASE) REGULATIONS, 1953

As far as I know we have not taken any action with regard to the "Carriers" of food poisoning infections.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT 1948, SECTION 31 (as amended)

Meals on Wheels

Littleport. Supplied three times weekly. Secretary:
Miss M.A. Peake, 18 Hoof Close, Littleport, organised by the Littleport
District Nursing Association. During school holidays a Good Neighbour
Service is organised for necessitous cases. Our thanks are due to all
those persons who have given of their own time to make this possible.

Sections 47 and 50

As far as I am aware no action was required under either of
these Sections.

Ely Rural District Council

VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR
(The mid-year home population is used for the
statistical calculations)

<u>Live Births</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate	106	115	221
Illegitimate	14	3	17
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Totals	120	118	238
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Birth rate per thousand estimated population	16.1
Birth rate corrected by comparability factor (1.07)	17.2
Birth rate per thousand population (England and Wales)	17.2

<u>Still Births</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate	7	-	7
Illegitimate	-	-	-
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Totals	7	-	7
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Rate per thousand live and still births	29.0
Rate per thousand live and still births (England and Wales)	14.8

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Deaths</u>	78	62	140
Death rate per thousand estimated population			9.5
Death rate corrected by comparability factor (1.01).. .. .			9.6
Death rate per thousand population (England and Wales).. .. .			11.2

<u>Infant Mortality</u>	Death of infants under one year of age		
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate	-	1	1
Illegitimate	-	-	-
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Totals	-	1	1
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Infant Mortality rate (Infant deaths under one year per thousand live births)	4
Infant Mortality rate (England and Wales)	18.3
Neonatal Mortality rate (Infant deaths under four weeks per thousand live births)	4
Early Neonatal Mortality rate (Infant deaths under one week per thousand live births)	4
Perinatal Mortality rate (Still births and deaths under one week combined per thousand live and still births)	33
Legitimate Infant Mortality rate per thousand legitimate live births	4.5
Illegitimate Infant Mortality rate per thousand illegitimate live births	nil
Illegitimate live births per cent of total live births	7%
Maternal deaths (Deaths ascribed to pregnancy, child-birth and abortion)	nil
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	21
Deaths from Tuberculosis (all ages)	nil
Coronary Disease, Angina	26

Table Classifying Deaths Under Age Groups

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Under 4 weeks	—	1	1
4 weeks and under 1 year	—	—	—
1 year and under 5	—	—	—
5 years and under 15	1	—	1
15 years and under 25	1	2	3
25 years and under 35	1	—	1
35 years and under 45	2	—	2
45 years and under 55	3	1	4
55 years and under 65	10	6	16
65 years and under 75	26	16	42
75 years and over	34	36	70
Totals	<u>78</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>140</u>

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE IN AGE GROUPS, 1967

in Years	Scarlet Fever	Whooping Cough	Acute Poliomyelitis Paralytic Non-Paralytic		Dysentery	Measles	Totals
er 1 year	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
	-	-	-	-	-	7	7
	-	5	-	-	1	9	15
	-	2	-	-	-	9	11
	-	1	-	-	-	5	6
9	3	12	-	-	4	51	70
- 14	-	3	-	-	-	3	6
- 24	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
and over	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	3	23	-	-	6	88	120

in Years	Acute Pneumonia	Erysipelas	Food Poisoning	Puerperal Pyrexia	Para- typhoid	Ophthalmia Neonatorum	Totals
er 5	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
- 14	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
- 44	1	-	-	1	-	-	2
- 64	-	4	-	-	-	-	4
and over	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
Totals	4	5	-	1	-	-	10

Ante-natal and Post-natal clinics

Other villages General practitioners hold ante-natal clinics in their surgeries.

Tuesdays	Littleport	(weekly)	Oddfellows Hall, Littleport	2.30 - 4.30 p.m. Asst. M.O. attend 1st & 3rd Tuesday
	Haddenham	2nd & 4th	Church Hall	2 - 4 p.m. G.P. attends 4th Tuesday.
	Sutton	4th	Methodist Church Hall	2 - 4 p.m. G.P. attends Extra clinic held quarterly.
Wednesdays	Blackhorse Drove	4th	Community Centre	2 - 4 p.m. Asst. M.O.
	Lt. Downham	4th	Parish Hall	2.30 - 3.30 p.m. Asst. M.O.

In Haddenham and Sutton there are very successful Mothers' Clubs and Young Wives Clubs organised by the Health Visitors.

A pre-school playgroup is held at Haddenham.

District Nursing and Midwifery Service

In the Littleport and Little Downham areas there are two district nurse midwife/health visitors, one district midwife, one full time general nurse, and one part time general nurse. The male nurse from Ely assists in the area where required.

In the Haddenham and Sutton areas there are two district nurse midwife/health visitors and a part time general nurse.

Health visitors from Ely undertake health visiting and school nursing duties in the villages of Stretham, Witchford and Little Thetford.

Chiropody Service

Organised by the District Nursing Associations, the financial responsibility being that of the County Council.

Geriatric Visiting

Undertaken by a Health Visitor from Ely in close liaison with Chesterton Hospital and The Tower Hospital, Ely.

R E P O R T

of the

CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

D.J. Gwynn, M.A.P.H.I.,
Public Health Department,
11, Lynn Road,
ELY,
Cambs.
Tel. No: Ely 2894.

1. CARAVAN SITES:

There have been no serious problems concerning caravan sites during the year. Routine visits have been made to ensure satisfactory standards and compliance with site licences.

No demand has been shown for extra sites in the district, and the well established residential sites seem adequate to deal with local needs.

The 7 multiple residential sites cater for over 70% of the caravans permanently used for human habitation, while 39 caravans are established on individual sites. Two holiday sites have licences authorising the use of 34 caravans for a limited season.

A request from the County Welfare Officer for staff assistance in conducting a survey of the gypsy population had to be turned down, but a list of 19 locations known to be frequented by itinerant van dwellers was supplied. In common with many of our neighbours in this part of the world we witness the coming and going of many small bands of travellers seeking seasonal work in agriculture. Local consternation is shown from time to time at the anti-social activities of the minority but, if trouble seems imminent, the culprits usually disappear 'over the border' before action is taken, leaving only a circle of ashes and a heap of rubbish for identity.

Most of these itinerants would be better served if the farmers who employed them provided minimum facilities of a hard standing and stand-pipe, and exercised a little control over tidiness, instead of allowing them the use of an open field usually situated in the most conspicuous position and lacking amenity of any sort. Those who encourage them into the district could well set a good example in this way.

In October the Housing Committee considered a suggestion from the County Planning Officer on the possibility of setting up a multiple caravan site in the Whitecross Road area of Wilburton to accommodate the high proportion of single sites in that part of the district. It being felt that no nuisance was present under existing arrangements, no useful purpose would be served in pursuing the matter.

2. FOOD CONTROL:

a) Food Premises

100 visits were made to premises where food is handled, stored and sold, and 7 mobile food shops were inspected.

a) Food Premises (Contd.)

The types of food businesses in established premises in the district are classified as follows:-

BAKERS AND CONFECTIONERS	5
BUTCHERS	13
CAFES	4
FRIED/WET FISH MERCHANTS	2
GROCERS/GENERAL PROVISIONS	42
GREENGROCER	1
HONEY BLENDER	1
POULTRY SLAUGHTERHOUSES	2
SLAUGHTERHOUSES	1
SWEET & ICE CREAM SHOPS	6
LICENCED PREMISES	27
SCHOOL CANTEENS	6
CONVALESCENT HOME	1
CHEESE FACTORY	1
	<hr/>
TOTAL	112
	<hr/>

b) Food Hygiene

Standards were found to be reasonable in all cases and there was no recourse to formal action in any respect. All premises now comply with Regulation 16 and, where necessary, Regulation 19 of the Food Hygiene (General) Regulations 1960. Improvements in structural conditions are always possible, of course, but the greater task must now be in the raising of personal standards and the encouragement of clean habits among food handlers.

Advice was again readily given to anyone contemplating alterations or additions to food premises, and experience of equipment, cleaning materials, pest control and other related items was available to any person engaged in the food trade.

Plans were received from the administrators of two Church Halls in Littleport showing improvements to the kitchen facilities. In both cases no indication had been given that a hot water supply would be available or that adequate facilities would be made for hand washing as opposed to the washing of utensils and equipment. Representation was made to both bodies, pointing out the possibility of receptions and similar functions being held in their premises during which food would be handled and, as a result, steps were taken to incorporate adequate facilities before the schemes were started. In one other case a public hall was inspected, and informal approaches were then made with a view to improving the facilities available for personal hygiene and general cleanliness.

2. FOOD CONTROL (Contd.)

b) Food Hygiene (Contd.)

Some gentle pressure was brought to bear on dog owners with a request that they refrain from taking their animals into food shops. Transfers, carrying the request were made available to all food traders, and the response from them was most encouraging. The old argument that customers would be driven away, and take their dogs elsewhere, seems to have dropped out and, so far as I am aware, no offence has been given, or taken, as a result of our action.

c) Registered Premises

There were 67 premises registered for the storage and sale of ice cream. 48 were being used for that purpose. In addition, 8 premises were registered for the manufacture of sausages, etc. No samples were taken.

d) Meat Inspection

No difficulties were experienced in the maintenance of 100% inspection of carcasses and offal at the only slaughterhouse in the district. The standard charges were made for this service.

The Table on the following page gives details of carcase inspections and condemnations.

There are two poultry processing establishments in the district. It is estimated that through-put amounts to 2,200 per week, but no routine inspection programme has been arranged.

Arrangements were made for the Additional Public Health Inspector to attend a Course on poultry inspection arranged by the West Suffolk Education Committee in co-operation with the Eastern Centre of the Association of Public Health Inspectors.

The Slaughter of Poultry Act, providing for the humane slaughter of poultry, received the Royal Assent on 10th May, 1967. It will come into force on a day yet to be appointed by the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

2. FOOD CONTROL (Contd.)

d) Meat Inspection (Contd.)

	Cattle excl. Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Horses
Number killed	61	Nil	Nil	34	Nil	Nil
Number inspected	61	Nil	Nil	34	Nil	Nil
<u>Diseases other than Tuberculosis and Cysticerci</u>						
Whole carcasses condemned	Nil	-	-	-	-	-
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	7	-	-	-	-	-
Percentage of numbers inspected affected with disease	11.5%	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Tuberculosis only</u>	Nil	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Cysticercosis only</u>						
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	1	-	-	-	-	-

e) Milk

No sampling of milk distributed in this district was carried out, and no matters relating to this product were referred to the Department.

f) Condemnation of Food

In addition to carcase meat and offal condemned on inspection at the slaughterhouse, the following foodstuffs were surrendered as being unfit for human consumption:-

1 x 6 lb. tin OX-TONGUE
1 x 3 lb. tin COOKED HAM
1 stone CURED FILLETS

3 HOUSING:

a) Council Housing Programme

Permanent Houses

No. of dwellings completed during 1967	25
No. of dwellings under construction at 31.12.67.	42
No. of dwellings provided under the Housing Acts to 31.12.67.	1713
No. of pre-war dwellings improved by the provision of standard amenities during 1967.	131
No. of pre-war dwellings under improvement at 31.12.67.	Nil
No. of pre-war houses improved since introduction of the scheme in 1958.	616

Temporary Houses

There is no temporary housing accommodation provided by the Council.

b) Private Enterprise Housing

Permanent Houses

No. of dwellings completed during 1967	112
No. of dwellings under construction at 31.12.67	129
No. of dwellings completed since April 1945	786

c) Subsidised Agricultural Housing

No. of dwellings completed during 1967	Nil
No. of dwellings completed since April 1945	* 44
No. of dwellings completed since commencement of scheme in 1938	72

(* This figure is included in the 786 shown at (b) above).

d) Improvement of Private Dwellings

Discretionary Grants

No. of dwellings improved or provided during 1967	8
Total of grants paid during 1967	£2,933: 0: 0.

3. HOUSING (Contd.)

d) Improvement of Private Dwellings (Contd.)

Discretionary Grants (Contd.)

No. of dwellings improved since 1949	248
Total of grants paid since 1949	£65,529: 0: 0.
Average grant per dwelling	£264: 0: 0.

Standard Grants

No. of dwellings improved during 1967	25
Total of grants paid during 1967	£4,700: 0: 0.
No. of dwellings improved since 1959	348
Total of grants paid since 1959	£48,886: 0: 0.
Average grant per dwelling	£140: 10: 0.

In both the public and private sectors of housing, steady progress has been maintained in the improvement of pre-war dwellings. In all, 33 private houses were improved, and the sum of £7,683 was made available by way of grant. As in previous years, the number of tenanted properties improved represents only a quarter of the total, but this must be expected in a district where, apart from Council house tenancies, the majority of dwellings are owner/occupied.

It could, of course, be anticipated that a time would come when all properties lacking basic amenities would have been improved, thereby bringing grant aided schemes to a conclusion. It must be remembered, however, that many dwellings, whilst having the benefit of basic amenities, still fall short of the rising standards applied to new houses. Up to this moment the grant schemes have been intended to give a few extra years of life to otherwise unfit properties, while sufficient new stock was made available to replace them. A distinction must be drawn between an improved property and a modernised property, and those which were improved in the early 1950's are now arriving at the stage where further refinements could be made. We have witnessed the success of the extended terms of standard grants, whereby owners were given extra assistance in the construction of septic tanks and the extension of their property to accommodate a bathroom where no space existed within the original structure. I now look forward to the time when applications for grants will include such items as heat and sound insulation, higher standards of lighting and ventilation, and the installation of central heating.

3. HOUSING (Contd.)

e) Slum Clearance

No. of Demolition and Closing Orders made, and
Undertakings accepted, during 1967 24

No. of families re-housed by Council from unfit
dwellings during 1967 12

A further revision of the slum clearance programme was presented to the Council in April. This indicated that 93 properties in the district were considered to be ready for formal action, and on the surface appeared to indicate that the programme had been at a standstill over the past 12 months. In fact, the number of representations made to the Housing Committee had been increased during the period under review, but during the revision it had been found necessary to transfer properties from the informal to the formal sections.

While formal action was proposed on 93 properties, it was pointed out that a total of 417 properties were under review. Out of that total, 147 properties were vacant, many of these already having been the subject of formal action, and standing in isolated situations in the fens and unlikely to be used for any further habitation. It is the type of dwelling in between the two extreme categories to which the most serious attention must be given. It had been felt that informal approaches to the owners would secure repairs and improvements, but this method involves a great deal of time, involving protracted correspondence and many personal visits, and success in this direction is far from obvious. Taking a realistic view of this situation, it means that nearly 200 dwellings must be re-classified when the present programme expires in 1969, thereby presenting an entirely different picture of the number of dwellings in the district which should be dealt with by formal action under Section 16 of the Housing Act 1957.

f) General

The Council's house building programme continued to be in the direction of providing bungalows for aged persons.

In October the official opening of Anchor Court, Littleport, was made by Councillor Mrs. R.L. Gill. This particular development, consisting of 7 2-bedroom and 11 1-bedroom bungalows, together with a communal building, a 2-bedroom house for the warden and 5 garages, formed the first phase of the development of a large housing estate off Victoria Street. All the usual facilities expected in this type of accommodation had been made available for the occupants, including/

3. HOUSING (Contd.)

f) General (Contd.)

including the connection to the warden's house of each bungalow by a bell call system. The total cost of the scheme (excluding the cost of land) was £56,000. An annual grant of £720 was being made by the County Council as welfare authority towards the cost of providing welfare services such as the provision of wardens accommodation, wages, etc. and the communal facilities.

At this stage two of these schemes are in operation, and satisfactory progress is already being made to provide similar facilities at Sutton and Little Downham.

4. OFFICES AND SHOPS:

Routine inspections were made at 26 registered premises involving 59 visits.

1 new retail shop was registered for the first time during 1967, the district total now being 89 premises in all classes.

A total of 30 contraventions were dealt with by informal action and mainly involved general cleanliness of sanitary accommodation and washing facilities.

5. PETROLEUM:

There were 109 petroleum storage installations licenced at the beginning of the year. These ranged from small tanks at farms and business premises to large capacity storage at filling stations. In total the licenced authorised storage is over 111,000 gallons of petroleum spirit in the district. Licence revenue amounted to £74:5:0d.

Applications were received for the fitting of self-service pumps at two filling stations. Detailed consideration was given to all aspects of the controls to be required, and included consultation with the County Fire Prevention Officers. In the absence of any adequate guidance from the Home Office, and the lack of any valid objections to such installations, licences were issued incorporating extended conditions as to safety precautions.

6. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES:

One set of public conveniences is provided and maintained by the Council at Littleport.

Now equipped with hand washing facilities, the convenience is well used by travellers on the A.10 trunk road. Minor damage was caused to the plastic soap dispensers on two occasions, but no serious vandalism has occurred. This is probably due to vigilance on the part of our own staff and also to frequent spot checks by the local police officers. The facilities are available 24 hours a day.

7. REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL:

The importance attached to this aspect of the Department's work can be seen in the increasing number of calls being made each year in connection with the service.

The Report of the Working Party on Refuse Collection was published on 16th May, 1967. The Ely Rural District Council found it was not alone in being criticised for failing to attain minimum standards in several directions, not least of which being the continued practice of kerbside collection. This was condemned as being unhygienic, untidy and a hardship for many people. The report made many other points, too numerous to mention, and gave much food for thought. No doubt the improvements suggested in its pages will come but, as I pointed out at the time, our costs have trebled in the past four years, due to improvements already made, and the added cost of back-door collection, the provision of bins as a rate-borne service or the introduction of paper sacks, would almost double the present budget.

It is a pleasure to note that routine collection schedules remained steady for the entire year, and the public did not have to suffer upheavals like that of the previous year when, with the transfer of tipping to Stretham, a complete revision of collection times had been found necessary.

The disposal of refuse is now concentrated in a gault pit at Stretham. The site is ideal for the purpose and, having overcome some initial difficulty of access and maintenance of a dry tipping area, good consolidation and control was achieved. A short-term tipping project, in a disused dyke at Littleport, was completed during the year.

7. REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL (Contd.)

In anticipation of duties to be placed upon local authorities by the Civic Amenities Act, it was agreed to negotiate for the purchase of land at Haddenham which had been on lease to the Council for tipping purposes. At the same time an approach was made to British Rail for the purchase of a length of disused railway cutting running alongside the tipping area. Both items were in hand at the end of the year, and a successful outcome is hoped for, as the increased area for disposal will give the Council sufficient volume to accommodate all refuse likely to be produced in the district over the next 20 to 25 years.

The modern refuse collection vehicles require extra skills to be employed in handling and in maintenance. As each driver carried out routine maintenance on his own vehicle, it was decided to encourage their interest and further their knowledge by taking advantage of practical courses offered by both vehicle and engine manufacturers. The senior driver attended a 3-day course organised by Dennis Bros. Ltd. at Guildford towards the end of the year, and it was anticipated that the other drivers would be appointed to attend at future dates.

8. RODENT AND PEST CONTROL:

Considerable attention has again been given to the control of rats and mice throughout the district. In an agricultural area constant vigilance must be kept to ensure that the numbers of vermin do not reach serious proportions. The responsibility to keep land free from rats and mice is placed upon owners and occupiers, and every opportunity is taken to remind them of their obligations. The Council does not provide a contract service to farms or other business premises, but ready mixed Warfarin is always available to anyone wishing to carry out their own treatment. Infestations in domestic premises are dealt with by the rodent operator.

Control measures were considerably improved on refuse tips and at sewage plants by the introduction of permanent baiting boxes. These had the two-fold effect of cutting down on the frequency of visits to each area and also eliminating the wastage of material which might otherwise be rendered ineffective by exposure to the elements. Following the success of a pilot scheme, the number of permanent baiting positions was being increased at the end of the year.

8. RODENT AND PEST CONTROL (Contd.)

The usual attention was given to various parish sewers, test baitings being carried out in six parishes. On no occasion was it found that the sewers were being infested.

Nearly every year a specific problem concerning other pests arises, and this one was no exception. Towards the end of July complaints were received from householders in the village of Stretham that they were being invaded by a plague of crickets. Investigations were put in hand immediately, when it was found that the insects were widespread and in large numbers. Various opinions were received as to the desirability or otherwise of the presence of these creatures, but they were obviously causing distress to a large section of the community and, although not being considered a public health hazard, a control programme was organised. A somewhat unfortunate feature of the situation was that the new refuse tip had only been established on the edge of the village a matter of ten months previously and, quite naturally, the residents pointed an accusing finger at that spot. Being mindful of the need for adequate control at refuse tips, an adequate spraying programme had been carried out throughout the spring and summer months, but only partial success was achieved in convincing the complainants that the tip was not the main source of the problem. It proved to be virtually impossible with the limited resources available to obtain an effective decrease in the size of the infestation. At the very least, our efforts proved to be a good exercise in public relationship, as at no stage was the Department accused of any lack of action.

The visits and treatments carried out during the year were as follows:-

(i) Rats and Mice

Complaints received:		194
Inspections:	Dwelling houses	300*
	Business premises	111*
Treatments of:	Dwelling houses	240*
	Business premises	23*
Surveys and treatments of:	Refuse tips	151
	Sewage plants	118
	Watercourses	72

(ii) Other Pests

Complaints received		72
Inspections:	Dwelling houses	95*
	Business premises	19*

8. RODENT AND PEST CONTROL (Contd.)

(ii) Other Pests (Contd.)

Treatments of:	Dwelling houses	67*
	Business premises	5*
Surveys and treatments of:	Refuse tips	57
	Sewage plants	4

(* These figures include 'follow-up' visits).

9. SEWAGE DISPOSAL:

a) Parish Sewerage Schemes.

The Council has good reason to be proud of its record concerning the provision of sewerage facilities. The vigorous pursuit of the programme to provide public sewers in all parishes was maintained during the year under review. All large scale contracts were completed, and attention was turned to the smaller, but none the less important, schemes for providing proper facilities in the remaining villages and hamlets.

Sewerage schemes in operation at 1st January, 1967

LITTLEPORT
SUTTON
STRETHAM
MEPAL
WITCHAM
WITCHFORD
HADDENHAM
LITTLE DOWNHAM
COVENEY

Sewerage schemes brought into use during 1967

WILBURTON
ALDRETH

Sewerage schemes in progress or proposed during 1967:-

9. SEWAGE DISPOSAL (contd.)

a) Parish Sewerage Schemes (Contd.)

LITTLEPORT (Extensions)

These works had been put in hand in order to improve facilities at the main Sewage Disposal Works, and also to reconstruct certain lengths of sewers of a deficient nature or which were allowing the ingress of surface water. Progress was extremely slow at the beginning of the year but those sections of new sewers which had been constructed were undoubtedly reducing the entrance of surface water.

During April the contractors had a Compulsory Winding-up Order made against them and consideration was given to the best methods of continuing the work in hand. On re-letting the contract, steady progress was made both at the works and at the Wisbech Road Pumping Station, all sewer reconstruction being completed, and improvements to the Disposal Works were continuing at the end of the year.

LITTLEPORT (Future works)

The Council considered and gave approval to a motion that parts of the built up area of Littleport, which were unsewered, should be the subject of a further scheme of extension. This would cover five or six small areas on the fringe of the present village development area.

LITTLE THETFORD

During January, contract documents were being prepared and tenders were sought in April. Following the commencement of works steady progress was maintained to the end of the year.

WARDY HILL

The Consulting Engineers' report on this scheme, which is designed to serve 35 properties, was received in May. Ministry approval was sought and given in August. At the end of the year contract documents had been prepared and sent out to intending contractors.

9. SEWAGE DISPOSAL (Contd.)

a) Parish Sewerage Schemes (Contd.)

BLACK HORSE DROVE

During March the initial report of the Consulting Engineers was received, and the Council resolved to adopt the proposals. These were submitted to the Ministry and approval was given during October. The scheme is designed to serve 57 properties.

PYMOOR

The initial report of the Consulting Engineers on this scheme, which is designed to serve 70 properties, was received at the beginning of October.

WENTWORTH

Difficulties were experienced in the early stages of preparing this scheme when it was found that the Sutton and Witcham Sewage Works, into which this scheme would be incorporated, would not adequately take the additional volume. This was further complicated by the fact that surface water infiltration was causing an over-load at those works. During March it was suggested that a television survey be carried out similar to the one employed in Littleport two years earlier, but the situation had not been resolved by the end of the year.

b) Sewage Samples

The River Authority's Inspectors took routine samples of effluent at the points of discharge into various watercourses in the district. Altogether 17 samples were taken, of which 14 came within a good or very good category.

There was one marginal sample and one unsatisfactory sample taken from the Littleport Works, and a further unsatisfactory sample was taken at Little Downham. All three were due to the presence of suspended solids above the recognised limits, but this did not indicate any serious fault.

The new works at Wilburton produced a satisfactory result, and all new works have now settled down to satisfactory functioning.

9. SEWAGE DISPOSAL (Contd.)

c) Cesspool Emptying

The policy of providing a free emptying of cesspools and septic tanks once every two years was continued. This service is provided for outlying households where there is no possibility of being connected to a main sewerage system. A similar service was applied to Council estates relying on small sewage disposal plants. In both cases this service was carried out by local private contractors.

With the virtual completion of all major sewerage schemes in the district, the Council called for a report on the future position regarding the emptying of cesspools. Following consideration of a joint report by the Engineer & Surveyor and the Chief Public Health Inspector it was decided that the time was now opportune for the purchase of a suitable vehicle to be used for running the Council's own scheme. This vehicle would be used to continue or improve on the existing service to private householders and the outlying Council estates and, in addition, would assist in the de-sludging of sewer dykes. It was anticipated that a more flexible service would be available, and an order for a cesspool emptying tanker was placed with the manufacturers during October.

Once again we were faced with the problem of the disposal of the contents of cesspools, and a satisfactory solution has not yet been found.

d) General comment

In accordance with normal practice the County Council gave approval to the various schemes adopted during the year for the purposes of grant under the Rural Water Supplies and Sewerage Acts 1954/1967.

In the light of the increased number of small disposal works and pumping units now in operation it was decided to appoint a fitter/pump attendant to deal with general maintenance.

In the period under review when a general tightening up on expenditure was felt, the Ministry paid even closer attention to proposals for individual sewerage schemes. It was found necessary to submit evidence of the general sanitary conditions in Wardy Hill, Pymoor and Black Horse Drove and, in each case, the detailed reports of the Chief Public Health Inspector enabled the Ministry to give approval to proceed.

9. SEWAGE DISPOSAL (contd.)

d) General comment

During the closing weeks of 1967 the general economic situation of the country became a point for general discussion. In the light of that situation the Council reviewed their proposals for the sewerage of Wardy Hill, Black Horse Drove, Pymoor and Wentworth and, after full discussion, resolved that such schemes proceed as planned.

10. WATER SUPPLY:

(For the following information I am indebted to Mr. F.W. Sanders, Engineer to the Ely, Mildenhall and Newmarket Water Board).

The Ely Rural District Council was represented on the Board by Councillors C.B. Darby, K.E. Darby and C.H. Martin, M.A.

a) Quality and treatment of water

The bulk of the water supplied by the Board is derived from the chalk on the north and east side of the district. This water is clear, bright, neutral and free from metals but it is hard. It conforms to the highest standards of organic purity.

The small sources at Swaffham Prior and Bottisham take their water from the greensand. This water is also clear and bright, slightly alkaline and soft, but it is rather deficient in oxygen, has a somewhat high content of chlorides and tends to be slightly aggressive to iron and some metals. Nevertheless it also conforms to a high standard of organic purity.

Over the last five or six years there have been a small number of complaints of a 'chemical' taste for which there is no satisfactory explanation. Usually the taste disappears after a time but several cases in the greensand supplies have persisted. These complaints have been investigated by the Water Research Association who suggest that the taste is accentuated by a deficiency of oxygen in the water. If these troubles persist it may be necessary to devise some means of aerating the water at the sources. However, there is some indication that the cause of the taste may be found in plumbing materials in association with chlorine used in the sterilization of the water.

10. WATER SUPPLY (Contd.)

a) Quality and treatment of water (Contd.)

Following the publication of an article in the medical press on the effect of water upon lead, a routine examination of all the Board's supplies was carried out in co-operation with the health departments of the district councils, who extended the survey to private supplies in the area. In all cases, the Board's supplies were reported by the analyst as being free from plumbo-solvent properties.

b) Beck Row Pumping Station (Ely Rural District supply zone).

The new pumping station is being built near the site of the old station at Beck Row.

A booster pump on loan from the Civil Defence Authority was installed in the 8" pumping main at Stretham to increase the volume of water which could be pumped to the Haddenham tower. Without this pump it would not have been possible to maintain the supply to Haddenham during the summer.

c) Swabbing of Mains.

The technique of swabbing by forcing cylinders of spongy plastic material through mains by the pressure of water has been developed and used extensively during the year.

It is now the practice to swab all new mains before they are sterilised and brought into use.

Swabbing involves some expense in the first instance to provide points where swabs can be inserted into the main or taken out. Once the points have been installed, future swabbing is very much easier.

The process presents some difficulty in the larger mains where swabs are too big to be removed through normal hydrants or other outlets. Huge quantities of water are required; it is estimated that one and a half million gallons of water and three hundred gallons of sodium hypochlorate will be needed to swab and sterilize the new main between Beck Row and Ely.

10. WATER SUPPLY (Contd.)

d) Medical Supervision

A Memorandum published by the Ministry of Housing & Local Government on safeguards to be adopted in the operation and management of Waterworks replaces a similar memorandum issued in 1939, and adds considerably to the list of safeguards and the detail in which they are specified.

While the earlier edition referred to consulting 'the Medical Officer of Health or other expert medical adviser' on matters concerning the health of workmen employed about waterworks, the new edition advises undertakers to ensure that full use is made of competent medical and other expert advice from medical officers experienced in the fields of public health and epidemiology. The Board is not in the fortunate position of the district councils of having their own medical officer and it is not clear who they should call upon for professional advice on medical matters. The Board is indebted to the medical officers of the district councils for the interest they have taken in this field, often beyond the strict limits of their official duties, and the advice they have given.

The memorandum refers to the duties of the district councils to take such steps as may be necessary for ascertaining the sufficiency and wholesomeness of water supplies within its area, a duty which has sometimes been lost sight of in the transfer of water undertakings from local authorities.

Co-operation between officers and the exchange of information between undertakers and local authorities is called for. Because local authorities are in touch with public health matters in the area, they are able to do much to safeguard water supplies, particularly in the control of buildings and drainage under the Building Regulations and Public Health Acts, the provision of sewage schemes and extensions, the emptying of cesspools, and disposal of sewage and the control of refuse tips.

The health departments of the district councils in the area have shown a very keen interest in the safety of the water supplies and have joined with the Board's officers in the investigating of complaints, protecting sources and similar matters.

11. WATERCOURSES AND SEWER DYKES:

The situation regarding routine cleansing and maintenance of watercourses and sewer dykes continues to deteriorate. On the surface it would seem that weed cutting and removal of sludge from approximately 20 miles of open dyke would be a relatively simple matter. It is when one considers the total distance is divided into over 60 small sections throughout the district, some being no greater than 3 chains in length, that the real difficulties start to emerge. This factor must be coupled with the situation in which the Council does not own the land alongside the dykes, and any recourse to mechanical aids must necessarily involve a great deal of negotiation with land owners. It has also been found that the majority of lengths do not readily lend themselves to the use of machinery, and we therefore have to fall back on hand labour. This is the third and greatest difficulty to be faced, as such labour is becoming harder to find with each succeeding year.

There is little doubt in my mind that very serious problems are being stored up for the future, and every year the number of complaints of water being held up by blockages or the inadequate functioning of land drainage schemes due to the silting up of the watercourses is increasing.

The only bright spot can be seen in the effectiveness of the various parish sewerage schemes for, whereas 32 lengths of dyke were known to be polluted in past years, only 6 or 7 now show any signs of contamination.

The Council was again advised on the possibility of piping the Holmes Lode at Littleport, and also part of the No. 3 Public Drain at Stretham. Both items were deferred on the grounds that the cost would be too high.

12. OTHER MATTERS:

a) Animal Boarding Establishments

Two premises were licenced under the 1963 Act. Annual inspections were made and the premises found to be of satisfactory standard. One establishment had ceased to operate at the end of the previous year.

b) Clean Air Act

No problems were encountered during the year which required action of a formal nature.

12. OTHER MATTERS (Contd.)

c) Game Dealers

There are two persons licenced by the Council to deal in game.

d) Schools

No routine inspections were made, other than to school meal centres, and I have no comments to make.

e) Street Naming and Numbering

New estates and in-fill development in a number of parishes required allocation of numbers. Six schemes for numbering new properties, and a similar number of schemes for re-numbering were submitted to, and approved by, the Council.

A request was received from Wilburton Parish Council for a scheme to be prepared for numbers to be allocated throughout the village. Unfortunately, pressure of other duties caused this to be deferred, and no progress had been made at the end of the year.

f) Water Safety

In connection with the National Campaign for Water Safety, the Council has continued to maintain lifebuoys at four danger spots on rivers in the district. Fortunately, these have not been subjected to any misuse, and it is equally fortunate that no emergency use has had to be made of them.

13. GENERAL DISTRICT INSPECTION:

HOUSING ACTS

Inspection of dwelling houses	565	
Improvement Grant inspections	53	
Improvement Grant enquiries	60	
Inspection of demolition works	18	
General surveys	3	
	<hr/>	699

13. GENERAL DISTRICT INSPECTION (Contd.)

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS

Drainage	125	
Rodent and Pest control	53	
Animal nuisances	4	
Offensive accumulations	17	
Refuse collection and disposal	292	
Water supply	1	
General	9	501
	<hr/>	

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT

Bakehouses	5	
Butchers	24	
General Food Shops	66	
Cafes, Canteens	8	
Fish Traders	1	
Hotel and Licenced Premises	2	
Ice Cream Traders	1	
Mobile Food Shops	7	
Meat Inspection	47	154
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CARAVAN SITES ACT

Site inspections		64
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OFFICES, SHOPS & RAILWAY PREMISES

Registration queries	1	
Inspections	58	59
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INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Visits to private houses	576	
Visits to shops, schools, etc.	4	580
	<hr/>	

FACTORIES

Inspections		3
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PETROLEUM REGULATIONS

Licencing enquiries	7	
Pressure testing	4	11
	<hr/>	

OTHER VISITS

Street naming and numbering	17	
Animal Boarding Establishments	5	
Noise abatement	1	
Sundry	105	128
	<hr/>	

TOTAL INSPECTIONS 2199

14. LEGISLATION AND LITERATURE

Various Acts and Regulations were received during the year from Central Government Departments, together with explanatory circulars and other publications directly concerning our duties.

The following is an indication of the range of subjects which were covered:-

Report of the Working Party on Refuse Collection.
Civic Amenities Act 1967.
Removal of Refuse Regulations 1967.
Slaughter of Poultry Act 1967.
The Food (Control of Irradiation) Regs. 1967.
Circular 69/67 - Slum Clearance.
Circular 40/67 - National Water Safety.
Circular 1/67 - Street Names.
Food Hygiene Codes of Practice - No. 7.

15. GENERAL COMMENTS

I am grateful for the opportunity of presenting details of the Department's activities during 1967. Environmental hygiene is reflected in various everyday happenings, many of which seem to be only remotely connected with each other, if at all, but every subject dealt with in the preceding sections bears directly on the health or safety of people residing or employed in this district. Emphasis has not been laid on any one aspect other than by way of comments in the following paragraphs. I have tried to give equal attention to all matters, but obviously some have had to be more equal than others.

If the saying that 'there is nothing new under the sun' is true, then it is equally true to say that variations on old themes become greatly extended as the years pass. The routine public health complaints, having basic similarities, continue to be received but, as always, the unusual and unexpected incidents occur to add even greater interest to that already inherent in the work of a public health department.

Although we are aware of the likelihood of out-of-the-rut problems arising, we are not always adequately equipped to deal with them. From experience, I have found that these particular problems generally present difficulties from two angles. On the one hand, there is the problem which demands lengthy investigation and, on the other, that which needs specialised equipment. With the limited resources of the department it is no simple matter to concentrate staff activity for any length of time in one specific direction, and the location and hiring of plant and machinery for a single project can be a lengthy procedure.

15. GENERAL COMMENTS (Contd.)

Two such incidents come quickly to mind. One has already been indicated in the text of the report and concerned a plague of crickets in the parish of Stretham. In that particular instance, effective and immediate control could only have been obtained by an intensive 'search and destroy' operation involving a considerable number of man hours and the use of high capacity spraying apparatus. Neither of the commodities was readily available.

The other incident involved the investigation of a case of food poisoning which, although involving only one family, presented nearly every complication that could possibly arise. One of the carriers was employed at a nearby hospital, one employed at a school and, finally, one employed in the catering trade. The urgency required for this investigation needs hardly to be stressed. The infected carriers were naturally required to cease their employment during the period of the infection, and enquiries were immediately made as to other contacts and the possible source of the infection. The ultimate answer was simple. The infective organism had been transferred from raw pet food on to utensils used by members of the family. The gathering of the evidence, which supplied that answer, was not so simple. With constant personal visits to the family and much tabulation to be done in the office, little time was left over for more routine work. It was also necessary to seek the co-operation of colleagues in adjoining districts and the services of the Public Health Laboratory staff, with whom we were in daily contact for a period of several weeks. Dr. Maurice-Smith and I were most grateful for the willing help given by all concerned.

Nearly every sector of public spending was affected by the national economic situation, but at least one side of our work was able to continue unabated. I refer to the improvement grant schemes. The majority of applications for grants again came from owners who had been approached informally because their properties were included in the general slum clearance programme. Without exception, owners who take advantage of the grant schemes have been most impressed by the transformation to their property and, while probably being a little doubtful of our enthusiasm for them to spend their money in the initial stages, have been more than satisfied when the final results have been seen.

15. GENERAL COMMENTS (Contd.)

Wide publicity was given at the beginning of the year to a serious problem being experienced in the City of New York. The city officials had a strike of refuse collectors on their hands, and it was interesting to note how rapidly conditions deteriorated when the removal of refuse came to a standstill. It certainly pointed to the importance of that particular service as the scene was summed up by one reporter as "it's like England must have been in Elizabethan days when everyone threw their rubbish in the streets". Of course he was referring to the days of Elizabeth I, but it serves to indicate how quickly a very unpleasant situation can occur when an essential public service ceases to function. All the dangers allied to rotting refuse, the presence of rats and flies, and the threat of infection were all witnessed. In this district we have been fortunate enough to enjoy good staff relationships and an uninterrupted service for many years, and I have yet to receive any valid complaint against the men who, week by week, and in all weathers collect the household refuse.

It has become almost a point of honour to mention the inadequacy of visits to food premises, but it is a point well worth repeating. We cannot afford to be lulled into a false sense of security and to say with a self satisfied air that we have no major outbreaks of food poisoning. At any premises where food is stored, handled and prepared there is an ever present risk of food borne infection. The very presence of a public health inspector in, or even near, food premises seems to have a salutary effect on both management and staff alike, and the more frequent the visits the higher the standards which can be achieved. It can hardly be said that an average of one visit per year is adding significantly to the raising of food handling standards or to the prevention of food poisoning.

I have always found it to be the Council's wish to assist the staff in keeping abreast of modern developments, thus enabling the residents in the district to have the fullest advantage of new knowledge and techniques. One means of achieving this aim is the attendance of officers at Conferences and specialised courses, and I was grateful for the opportunity to attend the Conference of the Association of Public Health Inspectors as a delegate. A mini-conference in the form of the Association's Week-end School was attended by the Additional Public Health Inspector, while arrangements were also made for the assistant foreman to attend a course for supervisors of manual workers, which had been arranged by the Eastern District Council for Local Authorities Services (Manual Workers). In order to make fuller use of time spent on district inspections, portable tape recorders were provided for myself and Mr./

15. GENERAL COMMENTS (Contd.)

Mr. Shaw, and these have been used extensively for the purpose of 'on site reports' and recording of visits, thus eliminating the need for lengthy hand written notes. They have also served a useful purpose inside the office, as our typist cannot be in two places at once, thus dictation can be duplicated in the early part of the day for transcription at a later stage. This situation, however, has its obvious drawbacks, as the greater the output of work from your Inspectors, so the greater the burden placed upon our one clerical officer. A choice must inevitably be made between an increase in staff to meet expanding commitments on the one hand, or the pruning out of non-essential public health work on the other.

It is with deep regret that I record the death of Dr. K.S. Maurice-Smith on the 15th October, 1967. He had been in practice in Ely since 1928 and, for the greater part of his time, was also Medical Officer of Health to both our own and the Ely Urban District Council. He took a very great interest in the affairs of the Department, and I greatly valued the wealth of his experience during our frequent discussions on the district's problems. At many a Council or Committee meeting his ability to give "off the cuff" comments on any public health topic was always adequate, and he had an enviable manner of making his points tell by drawing upon his great fund of anecdotes for every occasion.

This report would be incomplete without reference to the faithful efforts of both Mrs. Main and Mr. Shaw in their respective duties. My thanks are also due to my fellow officers for their advice and co-operation in all matters on which I have need to approach them, and also to the Chairman and Members of the Council for taking such a keen interest in the affairs of the department.

Your obedient servant,

D.J. GWYNN,

Chief Public Health Inspector.

November 1968.

FACTORIES:

The following details give the prescribed particulars which are required by Section 153(1) of the Act.

No narrative comments are possible as only three inspections were made. The greater part of duties under the Act are undertaken by the Factory Inspectorate.

1. Inspections for purposes of provision as to health (including inspections made by Public Health Inspectors).

Premises (1)	Number on Register (2)	Number of		
		Inspections (3)	Written Notices (4)	Occupiers Prosecuted (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by local authorities	7	1	Nil	Nil
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by local authorities	40	2	Nil	Nil
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by local authorities (excluding out-workers premises)	1	—	Nil	Nil
Totals	48	3	Nil	Nil

2. Cases in which DEFECTS WERE FOUND:—

NIL.

3. Notification was received of one outworker being employed in producing knitted garments.

